

# RECONSTRUCTION.

The President's Message—Lieutenant-General Grant's Report.

## PRELIMINARY JOHNSON'S MESSAGE.

To the Senate of the United States:

In reply to the resolution adopted by the Senate on the 12th instant, I have the honor to state that the rebellion waged by a portion of the people against the properly constituted authorities of the Government of the United States has been suppressed; that the United States are in possession of every part in which the insurrection existed; and that, as far as could be done, the courts of the United States have been restored, post-offices re-established, and steps taken to put into effective operation the revenue laws of the country.

As the results of the measures instituted by the Executive, with the view of inducing a resumption of the functions of the States comprehended in the inquiry of the Senate, the people in North-Carolina, South-Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Tennessee have reorganized their respective State governments, and are yielding obedience to the laws and Government of the United States with more willingness and greater promptitude than under the circumstances could reasonably have been anticipated.

The proposed amendment of the Constitution providing for the abolition of slavery forever within the limits of the country has been ratified by each one of those States with the exception of Mississippi, from which no official information has been received, and in nearly all of them measures have been adopted which are now pending for their ratification. The privileges which are essential to their comfort, protection and security, in Florida and Texas the people are making commendable progress in restoring their State governments, and no doubt is entertained that they will, at an early period, be in a condition to resume all of their practical relations with the Federal Government.

In that portion of the Union lately in rebellion, the aspect of affairs is more promising than in view of all the circumstances could well have been expected. The people throughout the entire South evince a laudable desire to renew their allegiance to the Government, and to repair the devastations of war by a prompt and cheerful return to peaceful pursuits. An abiding faith is entertained that their minds will conform to their professions, and that in acknowledging the supremacy of the Constitution and the laws of the United States their loyalty will be unreservedly given to the Government, whose leniency they cannot fail to appreciate and whose fostering care will soon restore them to a condition of prosperity. It is true that in some of the States the demoralizing effects of the war are to be seen in occasional disorders; but these are local in character, not frequent in occurrence, and are rapidly disappearing as the civil authority is extended and sustained. Perplexing questions were naturally to be expected from the great and sudden change in the relations between the two races; but systems are gradually developing themselves under which the freedmen will receive the protection to which he is justly entitled, and, by means of his labor, make himself a useful and independent member of the community in which he has his home.

From all the information in my possession and from that which I have recently derived from the most reliable authority, I am induced to cherish the belief that sectional animosity is surely and rapidly disappearing, and in its place a spirit of nationality, and that representation, connected with a properly adjusted system of taxation, will result in a harmonious restoration of the relations of the States to the National Union.

The report of Carl Schurz is herewith transmitted, as requested by the Senate. No reports from the Hon. John Covode have been received by the President. The attention of the Senate is invited to the accompanying report of Lieutenant-General Grant, who recently made a tour of inspection through several of the States whose inhabitants participated in the rebellion.

ANDREW JOHNSON.  
Washington, D. C., December 18, 1865.

## LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT'S REPORT.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES,  
WASHINGTON, Dec. 18, 1865.

His Excellency A. Johnson, President of the United States:

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With your approval, and also that of the honorable Secretary of War, I left Washington on the 27th of last month for the purpose of making a tour of inspection through some of the Southern States, or States lately in rebellion, and to see what changes were necessary to be made in the disposition of the military forces of the country, how these forces could be reduced, and expenses curtailed, &c., and to learn, as far as possible, the feelings and intentions of the citizens of the Southern States toward the Federal Government. The State of Virginia being so accessible to Washington city, and information from this quarter therefore being readily obtained, I hastened through the State without conversing or meeting with any of its citizens. In Raleigh, North Carolina, I spent one day; in Charleston, South Carolina, two days; in Savannah, Georgia, each one day. Both in traveling and while stopping, I saw much and conversed freely with the citizens of those States, as well as with officers of the army who have been stationed among them. The following are the conclusions come to by me:

I am satisfied that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation of affairs in good faith. The question which has heretofore divided the sentiments of the people of the two sections—slavery and State rights, or the right of a State to secede from the Union—they regard as having been settled forever by the highest tribunal—arms—that man can resort to. I was pleased to learn from the leading men whom I met that they not only accepted the decision arrived at as final, but that now the smoke of battle has cleared away, and time has been given for reflection, that this decision has been a fortunate one for the whole country, they receiving the like benefits from it with those who opposed them in the field and in the council.

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There is such universal acquiescence in the authority of the Federal Government throughout the portions of the country visited by me, that the mere presence of a military force, without regard to numbers, is sufficient to maintain order. The good of the country, and economy, require that the force kept in the interior where there are many

freedmen (elsewhere in the Southern States than at forts upon the seaboard, no force is necessary), should all be white troops. The reasons for this are obvious without mentioning many of them. The presence of black troops, lately slaves, demoralizes labor, both by their advice and by their example, and by resort to freedom for long distances around. White troops generally excite no opposition, and therefore a small number of them can maintain order in a given district. Colored troops must be kept in bodies sufficient to defend themselves. It is not the thinking men who would use violence toward any class of troops sent among them by the Federal Government, but the ignorant in some places might, and the late slave seems to be imbued with the idea that the property of his late master should by right belong to him, at least should have no protection from the colored soldier. There is danger of collision being brought on by such cases.

My observations lead me to the conclusion that the citizens of the Southern States are anxious to return to self-government within the Union as soon as possible; that whilst reconstructing, they want and require protection from the Government; that they are earnest in wishing to do what they think is required by the Government not humiliating to them as citizens, and that if such a course was pursued by them they would pursue it in good faith. It is to be regretted that there cannot be a greater commingling at this time between the citizens of the two sections, and particularly of those entrusted with the law-making power.

I did not give the operations of the Freedmen's Bureau that attention I would have done if more time had been at my disposal. On the subject, however, I have had officers connected with the Bureau, lead me to think that in some of the States its affairs have not been conducted with good judgment or economy, and that the belief, widely spread among the freedmen of the Southern States, that the lands of their former owners will at least in part be divided among them, has come from the mismanagement of the Bureau. It is seriously interfering with the willingness of the freedmen to make contracts for the coming year. In some form the Freedmen's Bureau is an absolute necessity until civil law is established and enforced, securing to the freedmen their rights and full protection. At present, however, it is independent of the military establishment of the country, and seems to be operated by the different agencies of the Bureau, according to the different notions. Everywhere General Howard, the able head of the Bureau, made friends by the just and fair instructions and advice he gave; but the complaint in South Carolina was that when he left things went on as before.

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From all the information in my possession and from that which I have recently derived from the most reliable authority, I am induced to cherish the belief that sectional animosity is surely and rapidly disappearing, and in its place a spirit of nationality, and that representation, connected with a properly adjusted system of taxation, will result in a harmonious restoration of the relations of the States to the National Union.

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SIR: In reply to your note of the 16th instant, requesting a report from me giving such information as I may be possessed of coming within the scope of the inquiries made by the Senate of the United States in their resolution of the 12th instant, I have the honor to submit the following:

With your approval, and also that of the honorable Secretary of War, I left Washington on the 27th of last month for the purpose of making a tour of inspection through some of the Southern States, or States lately in rebellion, and to see what changes were necessary to be made in the disposition of the military forces of the country, how these forces could be reduced, and expenses curtailed, &c., and to learn, as far as possible, the feelings and intentions of the citizens of the Southern States toward the Federal Government. The State of Virginia being so accessible to Washington city, and information from this quarter therefore being readily obtained, I hastened through the State without conversing or meeting with any of its citizens. In Raleigh, North Carolina, I spent one day; in Charleston, South Carolina, two days; in Savannah, Georgia, each one day. Both in traveling and while stopping, I saw much and conversed freely with the citizens of those States, as well as with officers of the army who have been stationed among them. The following are the conclusions come to by me:

I am satisfied that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation of affairs in good faith. The question which has heretofore divided the sentiments of the people of the two sections—slavery and State rights, or the right of a State to secede from the Union—they regard as having been settled forever by the highest tribunal—arms—that man can resort to. I was pleased to learn from the leading men whom I met that they not only accepted the decision arrived at as final, but that now the smoke of battle has cleared away, and time has been given for reflection, that this decision has been a fortunate one for the whole country, they receiving the like benefits from it with those who opposed them in the field and in the council.

Four years of war (during which law was executed only at the point of the bayonet throughout the States in rebellion) have left the people possibly in a condition not to yield that ready obedience to civil authority the American people have generally been in the habit of yielding. This would render the presence of small garrisons throughout those States necessary until such time as labor returns to its proper channel, and civil authority is fully established. I did not meet any one, either those holding places under the Government or citizens of the Southern States, who think it practicable to withdraw the military from the South at present. The white and the black mutually require the protection of the Federal Government.

# ARKANSAS.

SPEECH BY GENERAL SHERMAN.

A Frank Advice to the People.

A Convention of delegates from all the counties in Arkansas met at Little Rock on the 11th, to take into consideration the political affairs of the State. Maj. Gen. Sherman, who was visiting that department, was invited to attend. He was received by Dr. T. L. Gibson, the President, who, in his address, made complaints on behalf of the citizens of Arkansas, the principal one being that the people were not in possession of their rights, and asked the General to aid them to a full realization of their civil rights without delay.

Gen. Sherman responded as follows: GENTLEMEN: You are fully informed of the reasons why I am here, which is by the special invitation of your committee. I am a military man, and as such it is not expected or desired that I shall engage in any political discussions, and as you are here, politically, I am here to mingle in political movements. We are sworn to obey the Constitution and laws, and in this country the laws govern.

I have not stopped to inquire by what authority you come together, nor do I care; for citizens of any neighborhood, county or State, have a right to meet together and consider as to the best mode of promoting the interests of the community; but be sure you represent the sentiments of the people. I think you ought to be very careful that you reflect the opinion of the whole people of Arkansas. I know the people of the South, and I know no Southern gentleman would willingly or intentionally represent himself to be what he is not. But I understand you are citizens of Arkansas, and as such you are entitled to the best of advice, and I think, therefore, you have a right to be here to discuss matters of interest to yourselves—to consider your grievances, if you have any, to petition the President or Congress for redress, and I believe they will do you justice.

But you have more important work. It is not political. Your State needs attention in other directions. I come here from a distant land, and I tell you and you understand all other parts of the country. Give your immediate attention to those things which will make your State inviting to the stranger to come and settle among you. You have not fifty miles of good roads in Arkansas. Improve these, make travelling more easy from point to point. You are behind your sister States because you have not adopted any systematic system of internal improvement or developed any of your vast resources.

You are welcomed back into the Union, which is to-day stronger than ever, and the United States is now more highly honored abroad than heretofore, and beloved at home. But you think you have not all the rights you are entitled to, yet you have more rights and privileges under existing circumstances than you would have in any civilized country except America. Had you done as you did in this land under the bloody flag of Great Britain or the tri-color of France, many of you would not be here, and you would not have been permitted to assemble as you are now assembled, and talk over political questions and rights. Is not the meeting of this convention the best evidence that you have a good deal of liberty? Is it not the best evidence of your rights, I cannot inform you. What is right and wrong I do not profess to know, and I do not think you know, but we can all understand what is law. Inquire as to what is lawful—that is plain and simple. Act lawfully and you will do right. There are large numbers of lawyers within the sound of my voice who can tell you what is lawful. Point to the laws, and you will see that the law is your guide. Law is our guide.

I take the liberty of suggesting to you the propriety of every citizen helping his neighbors. The country is poor, and you can all do something toward building it up and restoring it to prosperity. Cultivate the soil; set your plantation in order; make